

SPEECH

612

OF

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GENERAL SAM HOUSTON,
OF TEXAS,

REFUTING

CALUMNIES PRODUCED AND CIRCULATED

AGAINST HIS CHARACTER AS

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE ARMY OF TEXAS;

DELIVERED

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES, FEBRUARY 28, 1859.

WASHINGTON:
PRINTED AT THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE OFFICE.
1859.

210

SPEECH

JENNIFER SAM HUSTON

OF TEXAS

DELIVERED

ON THE 10TH OF MARCH 1856

AT THE CITY OF HOUSTON

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1856

THE STATE OF TEXAS

WASHINGTON
PUBLISHED BY THE CONGRESSIONAL GLOBE OFFICE
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PERSONAL VINDICATION.

Mr. HOUSTON. Within a very few days, Mr. President, my political life will terminate. Previous to that event, I deem it due to myself, and to the truth of history, as well as to posterity, that I should be indulged in vindicating myself against uncalled-for charges and unjustifiable defamation. Were it necessary, in retiring from official position, to cite illustrious examples for such a course, I could cite that of General Washington, who felt it necessary, with his large, his immeasurable renown, to offer a refutation of *anonymous* calumnies which had been circulated against him, and to specify the particular facts in relation to them. I find, too, that General Jackson, in his lifetime, deemed it proper to file a vindication of himself, which was not disclosed until after his decease. Not wishing to place myself in a category with these illustrious men, I nevertheless feel that it is due to myself that I should vindicate my character from the attacks that have been made upon me. Within the next month, I shall have served my country, with few intervals, for a period of forty-six years. How that service has been performed, I leave to posterity to determine. My only desire is, that truth shall be vindicated, and that I may stand upon that foundation, so far as posterity may be concerned with my action, that they may have an opportunity of drawing truthful deductions. Either of the illustrious patriots referred to might have spared much of their world-renowned distinction, and yet have had a world-wide fame left. More humble in my sphere than they were; more circumscribed than they, I feel that it is the more necessary for me to vindicate what may justly attach to me, from the fact that I leave a posterity, and from that circumstance I feel a superadded obligation. Neither of those illustrious men left posterity. I shall leave a posterity that have to inherit either my good name, based upon truth, or that which necessarily results to a character that is not unspotted in its public relations. I have been careless of replying to these things for years. I believe no less than ten or fifteen books have been written defamatory of me, and I had hoped, having

passed them with very little observation, that, as I approached the close of my political term, and was about to retire to the shades of private life, I should be permitted to enjoy that retirement in tranquillity; that my defamers would not pursue me there with the rancor and hatred with which they pursue an aspiring politician whom they wish to sink or depress. I could see no reason for their continued efforts to detract from my fairly earned reputation.

Mr. President, these were fond anticipations, and they were delightful to cherish. I entertained them with cordiality; they were welcome to my heart. But I find recently, and it is that to which my observation is immediately directed, a production purporting to be a Texas Almanac, which contains what is said to be a narrative of the "campaign of San Jacinto." It has a name attached to it, and purports to be taken from the diary of a gentleman who has the prefix of "Doctor" to his name, to give it weight in society. The individual is unknown. He is a poor dupe, ignorant, I presume, of the contents of the paper which bears his name. It is possible that he never knew a word it contained. It would be difficult to think otherwise; for one avenue to his understanding, he being profoundly deaf, has for many years been closed, and he has given a positive contradiction to the parts of his paper that were considered the most pointed and important.

The object was to assail my reputation, and to show that the battle of San Jacinto, and all the preceding acts of generalship connected with that event, had been forced upon the general, and that really, on that occasion, he had acted with a delicacy unbecoming a rugged soldier. This is the design. How far it will be successful, I do not pretend to say; but it is strange that such a mass of this work should be produced. I perceive that no less than twenty-five thousand copies of it are to be circulated in the character of a book. It would be rather imposing, bound in cloth or leather, but in paper it is not so very important; but still there is something very *ostensible* about it.

My object, on this occasion, will be to show the

true state of facts connected with that campaign, and with the wars of Texas. It is a subject which I had hoped was passed by forever, and would never again come under review, particularly my having had any connection with it. I had desired that it would cease forever, so far as I was concerned, and that I should never be placed in a position in which I should seem to be fighting my battles over again. They have not been so numerous, or so illustrious, that I should recall them with any more pleasure than that which arises from having rendered yeoman service to my country, and rendered every duty that patriotism demanded. I had hoped, therefore, that I should be spared this occasion of presenting myself before the public. In treating of the subject now, I will speak of the general and Commander-in-Chief in the third person, for I do not like the pronoun *I*, so often repeated as would otherwise be necessary, and I shall give it that character which I think will be most seemly and acceptable.

It is necessary, in the first place, to announce the fact that, on the 2d of March, 1836, the declaration of Texan independence was proclaimed. The condition of the country at that time I will not particularly explain; but a provisional government had existed previous to that time. In December, 1835, when the troubles first began in Texas, in the inception of its revolution, Houston was appointed major general of the forces by the consultation then in session at San Felipe. He remained in that position. A delegate from each municipality, or what would correspond to counties here, was to constitute the government, with a Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Council. They had the power of the country. An army was requisite, and means were necessary to sustain the revolution. This was the first organization of anything like a government, which absorbed the power that had previously existed in committees of vigilance and safety in different sections of the country. When the general was appointed, his first act was to organize a force to repel an invading army which he was satisfied would advance upon Texas. A rendezvous had been established, at which the drilling and organization of the troops was to take place, and officers were sent to their respective posts for the purpose of recruiting men. Colonel Fannin was appointed at Matagorda, to superintend that district, second in command to the General-in-Chief; and he remained there until the gallant band from Alabama and Georgia visited that country. They were volunteers under Colonels Ward, Shackelford, Duvall, and other illustrious names. When they arrived, Colonel Fannin, disregarding the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, became, by countenance of the council, a candidate for commander of the volunteers. Some four or five hundred of them had arrived, all equipped and disciplined; men of intelligence, men of character, men of chivalry and of honor. A more gallant band never graced the American soil in defense of liberty. He was selected; and the project of the council was to invade Matamoras, under the auspices of Fannin. San Antonio had been taken in 1835. Troops were to remain there. It was a post more than seventy miles from any colonies or settlements by the Americans. It was a Spanish town or city, with many thousand population, and very few Americans. The Alamo

was nothing more than a church, and derived its cognomen from the fact of its being surrounded by poplars or cotton-wood trees. The Alamo was known as a fortress since the Mexican revolution in 1812. The troops remained at Bexar until about the last of December.

The council, without the knowledge of the Governor, and without the concurrence of the Commander-in-Chief of the army, had secretly sent orders authorizing Grant and others to invade Matamoras, some three hundred miles, I think, through an uninhabited country, and thereby to leave the Alamo in a defenseless position. They marched off, and left only one hundred and fifty effective men, taking some two hundred with them. Fannin was to unite with them from the mouth of the Brazos, at Copano, and there the two forces were to unite under the auspices of Colonel Fannin, and were to proceed to Matamoras and take possession of it. The enemy, in the mean time, were known to be advancing upon Texas, and they were thus detaching an inefficient force, which, if it had been concentrated, would have been able to resist all the powers of Mexico combined. The Commander-in-Chief was ordered by the Governor to repair immediately to Goliad, and if the expedition surreptitiously ordered by the council should proceed to Matamoras to take charge of it, under his conduct it was supposed that something might be achieved, or at least disaster prevented.

The council, on the 7th of January, passed an edict creating Fannin and Johnson military agents, and investing them with all the power of the country, to impress property, receive troops, command them, appoint subordinates throughout the country, and effectually supersede the Commander-in-Chief in his authority. As I said before, he was ordered to repair to Copano. He did so. While at Goliad, he sent an order to Colonel Neill, who was in command of the Alamo, to blow up that place and fall back to Gonzales, making that a defensive position, which was supposed to be the furthest boundary the enemy would ever reach.

This was on the 17th of January. That order was secretly superseded by the council; and Colonel Travis, having relieved Colonel Neill, did not blow up the Alamo, and retreat with such articles as were necessary for the defense of the country; but remained in possession from the 17th of January until the last of February, when the Alamo was invested by the force of Santa Anna. Surrounded there, and cut off from all succor, the consequence was they were destroyed; they fell victims to the ruthless feelings of Santa Anna, by the contrivance of the council, and in violation of the plans of the major general for the defense of the country.

What was the fate of Johnson, of Ward, and of Morris? They had advanced beyond Copano previous to forming a junction with Fannin, and they were cut off. Fannin subsequently arrived, and attempted to advance, but fell back to Goliad. When the Alamo fell, he was at Goliad. King's command had been left at Refugio, for the purpose of defending some families, instead of removing them. They were invested there; and Ward, with a battalion of the gallant volunteers of whom I have spoken, was sent to relieve King; but he was annihilated. Fannin was in Goliad.

Ward, in attempting to come back, had become lost or bewildered. The Alamo had fallen. On the 4th of March the Commander-in-Chief was reëlected by the convention, after having laid down his authority. He hesitated for hours before he would accept the situation. He had anticipated every disaster that befel the country, from the detached condition of the troops, under the orders of the council, and the inevitable destruction that awaited them; and to this effect had so reported to the Governor, on the 4th of February.

When he assumed the command, what was his situation? Had he aid and succor? He had conciliated the Indians by treaty whilst he was superseded by the unlawful edicts of the council. He had conciliated thirteen bands of Indians, and they remained amicable throughout the struggle of the revolution. Had they not been conciliated, but turned loose upon our people, the women and children would have perished in their flight arising from panic. After treaty with the Indians, he attended the conventions, and acted in the deliberations of that body, signing the declaration of independence, and was there elected. When he started to the army, the only hope of Texas remained then at Gonzales. Men with martial spirit, with well-nerved arms and gallant hearts, had hastily rallied there as the last hope of Texas. The Alamo was known to be in siege. Fannin was known to be embarrassed. Ward, also, and Morris and Johnson, destroyed. All seemed to bespeak calamity of the most direful character. It was under those circumstances that the general started; and what was his escort? A general-in-chief, you would suppose, was at least surrounded by a staff of gallant men. It would be imagined that some prestige ought to be given to him. He was to produce a nation; he was to defend a people; he was to command the resources of the country; and he must give character to the army. He had, sir, two aids-de-camp, one captain, and a youth. This was his escort in marching to the headquarters of the army, as it was called. The provisional government had become extinct; self-combustion had taken place, and it was utterly consumed.

The general proceeded on his way and met many fugitives. The day on which he left Washington, the 6th of March, the Alamo had fallen. He anticipated it; and marching to Gonzales as soon as practicable, though his health was infirm, he arrived there on the 11th of March. He found at Gonzales three hundred and seventy-four men, half fed, half clad, and half armed, and without organization. That was the nucleus on which he had to form an army and defend the country. No sooner did he arrive than he sent a dispatch to Colonel Fannin, fifty-eight miles, which would reach him in thirty hours, to fall back. He was satisfied that the Alamo had fallen. Colonel Fannin was ordered to fall back from Goliad, twenty-five miles to Victoria, on the Guadalupe, thus placing him within striking distance of Gonzales, for he had only to march twenty-five miles to Victoria to be on the east side of the Colorado, with the only succor hoped for by the general. He received an answer from Colonel Fannin, stating that he had received his order; had held a council of war; and that he had determined to defend the place, and called it *Fort Defiance*, and had taken the responsibility to disobey the order.

Under these circumstances, the confirmation of the fall of the Alamo reached the general. Was it policy to give battle there against an overwhelming force, flushed with victory and the massacre of the Alamo? Was it wisdom in him to put upon the hazard of a die three hundred and seventy-four men, in the condition in which his troops were, against ten thousand choice, victorious troops of Mexico, backed by a nation of eight million people, when he had only to rely upon the voluntary casualties that might exist to sustain him? What did he do when he first went there? He ordered every wagon but one to be employed in transporting the women and children from the town of Gonzales, and had only four oxen and a single wagon, as he believed, to transport all the baggage and munitions of war belonging to Texas at that point. That was all he had left. He had provided for the women and children; and every female and child left but one whose husband had just perished in the Alamo; and, disconsolate, she would not consent to leave there until the rear guard was leaving the place; but invoked the murderous hand of the Mexicans to fall upon and destroy her and her children.

Though the news of the fall of the Alamo arrived at eight or nine o'clock at night, that night, by eleven o'clock, the Commander-in-Chief had everything in readiness to march, though panic raged, and frenzy seized upon many; and though it took all his personal influence to resist the panic and bring them to composure, with all the encouragement he could use, he succeeded. An example of composure himself, he at last got the excitement allayed; but not until twenty-five persons had deserted and carried panic with them to the eastern section of the country, as far as the Sabine, announcing the fall and massacre of the Alamo, and the massacre of the troops. He fell back, but fell back in good order.

An incident that I will mention, of the most unpleasant character, occurred on leaving Gonzales. On that night, about twelve miles from there, it was announced to the general that the Mexicans would suffer; that a barrel of gin and a barrel of wine had been poisoned with arsenic, and that, as they came to consume it, it would destroy them. I presume no man ever had such feelings of horror at a deed being perpetrated of this kind, from which all the waters of the Jordan could not cleanse the reputation of a general. But, fortunately, the rear guard, without direction, set fire to the place on leaving it; and, at Peach creek, fifteen miles from that place, ere day dawned, explosions were heard, which produced some excitement in camp, where it was supposed to be the enemy's artillery; but the general rejoiced in it, as he knew, from the difference in the explosion, that it was not artillery, but the poisoned liquor. That is one instance that occurred, among other distressing events.

At Peach creek, fifteen miles from Gonzales, he met a reinforcement of one hundred and twenty-five men; but out of these one hundred and twenty-five men, ere morning twenty-five had again deserted, owing to the terrible details that were brought of the massacre of the Alamo. With that addition his force only amounted to four hundred and seventy-four men that remained with him. The next day he met a detachment of thirty-five

men, and anticipating that he would make a stand at the Colorado, as he found it impossible to make a stand at Gonzales, appointed an aid-de-camp, Major William T. Austin, and dispatched him for artillery to the mouth of the Brazos, for the purpose of enabling him, on arriving at the Colorado, to make a stand—for he had not a single piece of ordnance, not a cartridge, or a ball. The aid-de-camp departed with an assurance that within seven or eight days he would have it on the Colorado, at Beason's. In the mean time, and to show that the general was not a fugitive, or that he was not disposed to expose any one to hazard, he was informed on the Nevada, fifteen miles from the Colorado, that a blind woman, with six children, had been passed by, as she was not residing on the road, but off at a distance. He immediately ordered two of his aids-de-camp, with a company of men, to go and bring her up, and made a dilatory march until she joined them on the west side of the Colorado. He then halted at the Colorado for days, until the last hoof and the last human being that was a fugitive had passed over. He had permitted none to remain behind, exposed to the ruthless enemy.

There he remained until the news of Fannin's disaster came. Fannin, after disobeying orders, attempted, on the 19th, to retreat; and had only twenty-five miles to reach Victoria. His opinions of chivalry and honor were such that he would not avail himself of the night to do it in, although he had been admonished by the smoke of the enemies' encampment for eight days previous to attempting a retreat. He then attempted to retreat in open day. The Mexican cavalry surrounded him. He halted in a prairie, without water; commenced a fortification, and there was surrounded by the enemy, who, from the hill tops, shot down upon him. Though the most gallant spirits were there with him, he remained in that situation all that night and the next day, when a flag of truce was presented; he entered into a capitulation, and was taken to Goliad, on a promise to be returned to the United States with all associated with him. In less than eight days, the attempt was made to massacre him and every man with him. I believe some few did escape, most of whom came afterwards and joined the army.

The general fell back from the Colorado. The artillery had not yet arrived. He had every reason to believe that the check given to General Sesma, opposite to his camp on the west side of the Colorado, would induce him to send for reinforcements, and that Fannin having been massacred, a concentration of the enemy would necessarily take place, and that an overwhelming force would soon be upon him. He knew that one battle must be decisive of the fate of Texas. If he fought a battle and many of his men were wounded, he could not transport them, and he would be compelled to sacrifice the army to the wounded. He determined to fall back, and did so, and on falling back received an accession of three companies that had been ordered from the mouth of the Brazos. He heard no word of the artillery, for none had reached there, nor did it ever start for the army, and it was years before he knew that his orders had been countermanded, and his aid-de-camp withdrawn from him. He wishes to cast no reflection upon the dead. I shall not

enter into that; but the general's orders were not executed; they were countermanded; and the opportunity of obtaining artillery was cut off from him. He marched and took position on the Brazos, with as much expedition as was consistent with his situation; but at San Felipe he found a spirit of dissatisfaction in the troops. The Government had removed east. It had left Washington and gone to Harrisburg, and the apprehension of the settlers had been awakened and increased, rather than decreased. The spirits of the men were bowed down. Hope seemed to have departed, and with the little band alone remained anything like a consciousness of strength.

At San Felipe objection was made to marching up the Brazos. It was said that settlements were down below, and persons interested were there. Oxen could not be found for the march, in the morning, of a certain company. The general directed that they should follow as soon as oxen were collected. He marched up the Brazos, and crossing Mill Creek, encamped there. An express was sent to him, asking his permission for that company to go down the Brazos to Fort Bend, and to remain there. Knowing that it arose from a spirit of sedition, he granted that permission, and they marched down. On the Brazos, the efficient force under his command amounted to five hundred and twenty. He remained there from the last of March until the 13th of April. On his arrival at the Brazos, he found that the rains had been excessive. He had no opportunity of operating against the enemy. They marched to San Felipe, within eighteen miles of him, and would have been liable to surprise at any time, had it not been for the high waters of the Brazos, which prevented him from marching upon them by surprise. Thus, he was pent up. The portion of the Brazos in which he was, became an island. The water had not been for years so high.

On arriving at the Brazos, he found that the Yellow Stone, a very respectable steamboat, had gone up the river for the purpose of transporting cotton. She was seized by order of the general to enable him, if necessary, to pass the Brazos at any moment, and was detained with a guard on board. She remained there for a number of days. The general had taken every precaution possible to prevent the enemy from passing the Brazos below. He had ordered every craft to be destroyed on the river. He knew that the enemy could not have constructed rafts and crossed; but, by a ruse, they obtained the only boat that was in that part of the country, where a command was stationed. They came and spoke English. The boat was sent over, and the Mexicans surprised the boatmen, and took possession of it. Those on the east side of the river retreated; and thus Santa Anna obtained an opportunity of transporting his artillery and army across the Brazos. The general anticipated that something of the kind must have taken place, because his intelligence from San Felipe was, that all was quiet there. The enemy had kept up a cannonade on the position across the river, where over one hundred men were stationed. The encampment on the Brazos was the point at which the first piece of artillery was ever received by the army. They were without munitions; old horse shoes, and all pieces of iron that could be procured, had to be cut up; various things were to be provided; there

were no cartridges and but few balls. Two small six-pounders, presented by the magnanimity of the people of Cincinnati, and subsequently called the "twin sisters," were the first pieces of artillery that were used in Texas. From thence, the march commenced at Donoho's, three miles from Groce's. It had required several days to cross the Brazos, with the horses and wagons.

General Rusk had arrived in camp on the 4th of April. He was then Secretary of War—Colonel Rusk—and as a friend of the Commander-in-Chief, he was received. He was superseded, and Mr. Thomas was acting Secretary of War. He remained with the army. The Commander-in-Chief camped three miles from the Brazos timber, and with unusual vigilance preserved the forces together, only a few deserting. They were then east of the Brazos, and the settlements were east of them. He remained only that night. The road from San Felipe, situated below the army on the Brazos, led to eastern Texas or the Sabine. The road to Harrisburg crossed it at right angles going south. The general had provided a guide acquainted with the country, as it was a portion in which he had never been. The morning came. Arrangements were made early. Some embarrassments arose for want of animals for artillery; but soon they were in readiness, and as the troops filed out in the direction of Harrisburg, without an intimation being given to any one, two companies that had been stationed at San Felipe, and below that, on the Brazos, and ordered to concentrate at Donoho's, arrived. The officers were sullen and refractory; they had "not eaten." Some conversation took place. They asked if no fighting was to be done. They were told, fighting was to be done; they need not be uneasy about that; the enemy have crossed below. At that moment a negro came up and said, he had been made a prisoner by the enemy and was released, and announced the fact that Santa Anna had crossed the Brazos and was marching to Harrisburg. These companies were ordered into line. One of them obeyed; the other objected to going, as they had had no refreshments. The whole management, and the entire responsibility of every movement at that time, devolved upon the general. He told the refractory captain, whom he had known for many years, to march directly to the Trinity and protect the women and children if the Indians should prove turbulent; and, at all events, to kill beef for them, and see that their supplies were sufficient. The general acted upon no orders given to him during the campaign; but assumed the sole responsibility of all his acts.

The march to Harrisburg was effected through the greatest possible difficulties. The prairies were quagmired. The contents of the wagons had to be carried across the bogs, and the empty wagons had to be assisted in aid of the horses. No less than eight impediments in one day had to be overcome in that way. Notwithstanding that, the remarkable success of the march brought the army in a little time to Harrisburg, opposite which it halted. Deaf Smith, known as such—his proper name was Erasmus Smith—had gone over by rafts with other spies, and, after crossing, arrested two couriers and brought them into camp. Upon them was found a buckskin wallet, containing dispatches of General Filisola to General Santa Anna, as well as from Mexico, and thereby

we were satisfied that Santa Anna had marched to San Jacinto with the *élite* of his army, and we resolved to push on. Orders were given by the general immediately to prepare rations for three days, and to be at an early hour in readiness to cross the bayou. The next morning we find that the Commander-in-Chief addressed a note in pencil to Colonel Henry Raguet, of Nacogdoches, in these words:

"CAMP AT HARRISBURG, April 19, 1836.

"SIR: This morning we are in preparation to meet Santa Anna. It is the only chance of saving Texas. From time to time, I have looked for reinforcements in vain. The convention adjourning to Harrisburg, struck *panic* throughout the country. Texas could have started at least four thousand men. We will only have about seven hundred to march with, besides the camp guard. We go to conquer. It is wisdom, growing out of necessity, to meet the enemy now; every consideration enforces it. No previous occasion would justify it. The troops are in fine spirits, and now is the time for action." * * *

"We shall use our best efforts to fight the enemy to such advantage as will insure victory, though odds are greatly against us. I leave the result in the hands of a wise God, and rely upon His providence.

"My country will do justice to those who serve her. The rights for which we fight will be secured, and Texas free."

This letter was signed by the Commander-in-Chief.

A crossing was effected by the evening, and the line of march was taken up. The force amounted to a little over seven hundred men. The camp guard remained opposite Harrisburg. The cavalry had to swim across the bayou, which is of considerable width and depth. General Rusk remained with the army on the west side. The Commander-in-Chief stepped into the first boat of the pioneers, swam his horse with the boat, and took position on the opposite side, where the enemy were, and continued there until the army crossed. The march was then taken up. A few minutes, or perhaps an hour or so of daylight only remained. The troops continued to march until the men became so exhausted and fatigued that they were falling against each other in the ranks, and some falling down from exhaustion. The general ordered a halt after marching a short distance from the road to secure a place in a chaparral. The army rested for perhaps two hours, when, at the tap of the drum given by the general, they were again on their feet, and took up the line of march for San Jacinto, for the purpose of cutting off Santa Anna below the junction of the San Jacinto and Buffalo bayou. It was necessary for Santa Anna to cross the San Jacinto to unite with the Mexicans in Nacogdoches county, and incite the Indians to war. Santa Anna had provided a boat through the instrumentality of Texans who had joined him, and was in readiness to cross. He had marched down to New Washington, some seven or eight miles below the San Jacinto, and was returning to take up his march eastward. After sunrise some time, the army having halted to slaughter beeves and refresh, the signal was given that our scouts had encountered those of the enemy; eating was suspended, everything packed, and we were on the march. We marched down to the ferry of San Jacinto, and there halted. There was no word of the enemy. About half a mile or a mile up the bayou, where the timber commenced, we fell back and formed an encampment in the timber, so as to give security from the brow of the hill,

as well as the timber that covered it, at the same time running up the boat which he had provided, and securing it in the rear of our encampment.

That was the position taken. The artillery was planted in front, for it had never been fired, and the enemy were really not apprised that we had a piece. The troops were secured so as to expose none, but the few artillerists, to view. There were but eighteen of them, and nine were assigned to each piece. The enemy, within about three hundred yards, I think, took position with their artillery and infantry, and opened fire from a twelve-pounder. It continued until evening. It did no execution, however, with the exception of one shot. Colonel Neill, of the artillery, was wounded, though not mortally. That was the only injury we sustained. At length Santa Anna ordered his infantry to advance. They were advancing, when our artillery was ordered to fire upon them; but they being so much depressed, it passed over their heads and did no injury; but they returned in such haste and confusion to their encampment that it inspired our troops, and caused the welkin to ring.

Upon our left, a company of infantry was, by Santa Anna, posted in an island of timber, within one hundred and fifty yards of our encampment. An officer desired the general to let him charge, which was readily conceded. He wished to, and did, make the charge on horseback, though not in accordance with the general's opinion. It proved a failure; which will be explained hereafter.

The enemy, after receiving some injury from the discharge of our artillery, fell back to the heights of San Jacinto, and commenced fortifying.

In the evening, the general ordered a reconnoitering party, under Colonel Sherman, to reconnoiter; but they were ordered not to go within the fire of the enemy's guns, or to provoke an attack; but if he could, by his appearance, decoy them into the direction of a certain island of timber, they would be received there by the artillery and infantry that had been ordered to be in readiness to march to that point. No sooner was he out of sight, than a firing commenced, with a view, as Sherman himself declared, to bring on a general action, in violation of the general's orders. Confusion was the result of it. Two men were wounded in our line. A confused retreat took place; and the consequence was, that two gallant men were wounded, and one subsequently died of his wounds. This was done in direct violation of the General's orders; for it was not his intention to bring on a general action that day. The guards that night were doubled. The next day, about nine o'clock, troops were discovered advancing along the prairie ridge, in the direction of the Mexican encampment, which produced some excitement. The general, not wishing the impression to be received that they were reinforcements, suggested that it was a ruse of the Mexicans; that they were the same troops that were seen yesterday; that they were marching around the swell in the prairie for the purpose of display, because they were apprehensive of an attack from the Texans. He sent out two spies secretly—Deaf Smith and Karnes—upon their track, with directions to report to him privately. They did so, and reported that the reinforcement

which the enemy had thus received amounted to five hundred and forty.

Things remained without any change until about twelve o'clock, when the general was asked to call a council of war. No council of war had ever been solicited before. It seemed strange to him. What indications had appeared he did not know. The council was called, however, consisting of six field officers and the Secretary of War. The proposition was put to the council: "shall we attack the enemy in position, or receive their attack in ours?" The two junior officers—for such is the way of taking the sense of courts in the army—were in favor of attacking the enemy in position. The four seniors, and the Secretary of War, who spoke, said that "to attack veteran troops with raw militia, is a thing unheard of; to charge upon the enemy, without bayonets, in an open prairie, had never been known; our situation is strong; in it we can whip all Mexico." Understanding this as the sense of the council, the general dismissed them. They went to their respective places.

In the morning the sun had risen brightly, and he determined with this omen, "to-day the battle shall take place." In furtherance of that, he walked to the bayou near where he had lain on the earth without covering, and after bathing his face, he sent for the commissary general, Colonel Forbes, and ordered him to procure two axes, and place them at a particular tree, which he designated in the margin of the timber. He sent for Deaf Smith, and told him at his peril not to leave the camp that day without orders; that he would be wanted, and for him to select a companion in whom he had unbounded reliance. His orders were obeyed. After the council was dismissed, the general sent for Deaf Smith and his comrade, Reeves, who came mounted, when he gave them the axes so as not to attract the attention of the troops. They placed them in their saddles, as Mexicans carry swords and weapons, and started briskly for the scene of action. The general announced to them: "you will be speedy if you return in time for the scenes that are to be enacted here." They executed the order, and when the troops with the general were within sixty yards of the enemy's front, when charging, Deaf Smith returned and announced that the bridge was cut down. It had been preconcerted to announce that the enemy had received no reinforcement. It was announced to the army for the first time; for the idea that the bridge would be cut down was never thought of by any one but the general himself, until he ordered it to be done, and then only known to Smith and his comrade. It would have made the army polemics if it had been known that Vince's bridge was to be destroyed, for it cut off all means of escape for either army. There was no alternative but victory or death. The general who counsels will find, that in the "multitude of counsel there is confusion." It has been denied that the bridge was cut down by order of the general. It was said to be the promptings of Deaf Smith. It has been in these latter days that these calumnies are circulated. I will show, I think, from very good authority, that it has remained uncontradicted for nearly twenty years; for here it is. It was announced in the official report of the battle, in which the commanding general says:

"At half-past three o'clock in the evening, I ordered the

officers of the Texan army to parade their respective commands, having, in the mean time, ordered the bridge on the only road communicating with the Brazos, distant eight miles from our encampment, to be destroyed, thus cutting off all possibility of escape."

"I ordered them" is the language that is used in the official report of the general, that has remained uncontroverted until this time. It will be discovered, from incontestable evidence of the most honorable and brave amongst men, that the individual who gave origin to this calumny, was the very identical creature who proved recreant on the field. The Commander-in-Chief, however, felt no disposition to censure any one. He felt that there should be an amnesty in consideration of the glorious results of the battle. He wished not to censure any one, but gave all praise, and gave some too much. I ask the Secretary to read this letter.

The Secretary read as follows:

WASHINGTON, September 17, 1841.

DEAR SIR: You wish to know of me, what I know of the conduct of Colonel Sidney Sherman, before and after the battle of San Jacinto. On our march to that place, Colonel Sherman often asked me if I had heard you speak of him. I informed him that I had heard you speak of him, and always in the highest terms of praise. I thought he looked disappointed. There was mutiny and discontent in the army, created, as I believed, by those who wished to put you down; and I believed that Colonel Sherman was one of the most active in creating disturbance, as I will have occasion to show.

Various councils were held on the Brazos, as well as on the march to San Jacinto, for the purpose of opposing or destroying your authority. Colonel Sherman, I am satisfied, was among the most active of those who sought to destroy you. On the 20th of April, the day before the battle of San Jacinto, you gave Colonel Sherman orders to charge on an island of timber, on the left of the artillery, with two companies of his regiment, for the purpose of routing some Mexicans who were in the timber. He wished you to let him charge on horseback, which you reluctantly granted. As he approached the enemy they fired and killed one horse of his command, and the whole command came galloping back to the camp. In the evening, when the enemy had withdrawn to where they fortified, at his request, you ordered Colonel Sherman to take the cavalry and reconnoiter the enemy, and if he could decoy the enemy's cavalry to a certain island of timber, that the artillery and infantry should be there to sustain him, *but by no means to approach within gun-shot of the enemy's infantry or line.*

I was present when you gave the orders to Colonel Sherman, and soon after he came to me and asked me if I would sustain him, as he had determined to bring on a general engagement, contrary to your orders. At the same time, the officer with him said he had agreed to sustain him with his command. I replied that I knew it was contrary to your orders to him, for I heard you give them to him; but, if a general engagement was brought on, my regiment would be under arms, and I would support him; for you had ordered me to have the men under arms. He departed, saying he would depend on me. He soon commenced firing after he was out of sight of our camp; and, as it had not been expected from the orders given by you to him, there was great stir in the camp. I started with my command, and in marching a short distance, I saw the cavalry returning with two wounded men. In the mean time, Colonel Wharton, from you, ordered me not to advance, but to wait further orders. You afterwards ordered me, with my command, back to our camp, and showed evident dissatisfaction with Sherman for disobeying your orders, in attempting to bring on a general engagement, when you did not intend it should be done. It was then late in the evening of the 20th.

After the arrival of General Cos's command, next morning, (21st,) and I think it was between twelve and two o'clock, I was summoned to attend a council of war. I attended with six other field officers, when you told us the object of our being called together. *You asked the council whether we should attack the enemy, or remain in our position and [let] the enemy attack us.*

The officer lowest in rank voted first, and so on, until all voted. Only two out of the seven voted for attacking the enemy. The balance voted in favor of awaiting the attack upon us. They said that we had not bayonets to charge with;

and that it was through an open prairie; that our position was strong, and in it we could whip all Mexico.

When you received the sense of the council, you gave no opinion, but dismissed the members. Soon after, I was riding out to graze my horse and take a look at the enemy. You spoke to me, and asked me my object in riding out. I told you, when you said, "Do not be absent, Colonel, more than thirty minutes, as I will want you." I did return in less than a half hour; you requested me to see my captains and men, and ascertain their feelings about fighting. I reported favorably, and said they were anxious to fight, or they told many lies. You ordered the troops to be paraded; the second regiment, called Sherman's, as he was colonel, and myself lieutenant colonel. Soon after you ordered the parade, Colonel Sherman, in company with Colonel Burleson, came to me, and asked me *if I intended to obey your orders, and if I did not think it would be better to wait until next morning, just before day, and make the attack.* Sherman went on to say that whatever I said should be done. I told him that I would fight, if you said so, and that I would follow you to hell, if you would lead, in defending Texas. They then left me. When Colonel Sherman and myself were mounted, at the head of the regiment, he asked me if I would take command that day, as I had some experience in fighting, and he never had been in a battle. I thanked him kindly, saying that I would do so, and after we were ordered to advance, he rode with me until the enemy commenced firing upon us. Colonel Sherman then left in great haste for a small island of timber, about three hundred yards distant, in the rear of our left wing, where he secured himself, and remained there until the enemy had all fled. As I returned from the pursuit of the enemy, I met him coming up with some stragglers.

This statement is made principally from notes taken during the campaign, and from facts within my recollection, as though they had passed yesterday. I have foreborne to state anything about Colonel Sherman's conduct in disposing of, and appropriating the spoils *privately to his own use*; but, should it be necessary at any future day to do so, I am fully prepared.

I am your friend, &c.,

JOSEPH L. BENNETT.

General SAM HOUSTON, Washington, Texas.

Mr. HOUSTON. Mr. President, this is one of the gentlemen who have been most active in contributing to the contents of this almanac, as I have been informed, and one to whom the calumny has been traced. This is not the only evidence that I have in relation to that gentleman; and I will make one statement, as it is a fact that is important in relation to the calumnies to which I am responding: that this letter has been in the possession of General Sherman since 1843. He was furnished with a copy of it; and, during several years of Colonel Bennett's life, he never called for explanation, nor did he ever confront Colonel Bennett when he went where he was, but slunk from his presence, and cowered before him. Since his decease, Sherman has been busily engaged in propagating every slander against the Commander-in-Chief that malice could devise; and, though challenged and invited to publish the letter of Colonel Bennett, he has thought proper to rest under all the imputations of cowardice heaped upon him, and finds consolation, I presume, in trying to place others in his own category. Now, as this comes in at this particular point, I have another letter that I think proper to submit. It is very short, and I ask the Secretary to read it.

The Secretary read it, as follows:

WALKER COUNTY, November 2, 1857.

GENERAL HOUSTON: Seeing that you have been attacked by persons on pretense that they have been in the battle of San Jacinto, and wish to injure you by false charges, I feel it my duty to give you a statement of what I know to be correct.

I joined the army on the Colorado, and in its march to San Jacinto I joined Captain Hayden Arnold's company, of the second regiment, commanded by Colonel Sherman. Captain Arnold's company was the first in the regiment in the charge upon the enemy in battle. I was the fifth or sixth man from Colonel Sherman. While we were advancing

upon the enemy's lines, and before any firing had taken place, Colonel Sherman called out in an audible voice, "halt." At that moment Lieutenant Colonel Bennett, who was close by, hallooed out, "this is no time to halt, push on boys, the enemy is right here in this little timber, push on;" and advanced in front of the command. In casting my eye on Colonel Bennett a moment afterwards, I saw General Rusk near to him. Colonel Sherman halted where he gave the order "to halt," and I never saw him again until after the battle was over. I then saw him coming up in the rear with some stragglers, at the ravine where the army halted in the pursuit, and the place from which you ordered Captain Turner's company back to guard the spoils.

Your obedient servant, PHILIP MARTIN.
General SAM HOUSTON, *Huntsville, Texas.*

Mr. HOUSTON. This evidence, Mr. President, seems to account for the anxiety that Sherman entertains to place his conduct in such a light as to get rid of the deserved charge of cowardice, and ordering a halt before he fled from the field, and attach the imputation which he deserves, to the Commander-in-Chief. This is the gratitude he returns. But, Mr. President, it is proper to remark, that previous to the order for the demolition of the bridge, and during the early part of the day, two officers came to the Commander-in-Chief and asked him if it would not be well to construct a bridge across the bayou, immediately opposite the encampment, which was, perhaps, some seventy or a hundred yards wide at tide-water. The general, to get rid of them, remarked, "is there material?" and told them to see. They went, and after returning, reported that, by demolishing Governor Zavala's house, a bridge might be constructed. The general observed to them, that other arrangements might suit better, and cast them off. So soon as the general supposed the bridge was destroyed, or cut down, he ordered Colonel Bennett to go around to the captains and men of Sherman's regiment, to see what their spirits were; whether they were cheerful, and whether he thought them desirous for a battle. Colonel Bennett reported favorably. They were ordered to parade. The plan of battle is described in the official report of the Commander-in-Chief, to be found in Yoakum's history, one of the most authentic and valuable books in connection with the general affairs of Texas, that can be found; in which nothing is stated upon individual responsibility; everything in it is sustained by the official documents.

With the exception of the Commander-in-Chief, no gentleman in the army had ever been in a general action, or even witnessed one; no one had been drilled in a regular army, or had been accustomed to the evolutions necessary to the maneuvering of troops. So soon as the disposition of the troops was made, according to his judgment, he announced to the Secretary of War the plan of battle. It was concurred in instantly. The Commander-in-Chief requested the Secretary of War to take command of the left wing, so as to possess him of the timber, and enable him to turn the right wing of the enemy. The general's plan of battle was carried out. About all the silly and scandalous charges made against the general, as to ordering a halt during the action, and after he was wounded, leaving the field, I will examine the facts, known to the army, and every brave man in it. I will, as authority, refer to the report of the Secretary of War, General Rusk, and see what he says in relation to that. In his report to the President, *ad interim*, he says:

"Major General Houston acted with great gallantry, en-

couraging his men to the attack, and heroically charged, in front of the infantry, within a few yards of the enemy, receiving at the same time a wound in his leg."

This is the testimony of General Rusk, in relation to one of the calumnies that have been brought forward and paraded by the maligners of the Commander-in-Chief. Again, to show that the general was not laggard throughout the action, we find the attestation of as gallant a man as lives General Benjamin McCulloch. He says:

"At the battle of San Jacinto, I was in command of one piece of artillery. The fire from it opened upon the enemy about two hundred yards distant. We advanced after each discharge, keeping in advance of the infantry, until we were within less than one hundred yards of their breastwork, at which time I had aimed the gun, but was delayed in firing for a moment by General Houston, who passed across some thirty yards in front of the gun, and was at that time nearly that distance in advance of every man in that part of the field. After this, I saw him advancing upon the enemy, at least one third of the distance between the two armies, in front of Colonel Burleson's regiment, when it was not more than seventy or eighty yards from the enemy's breastworks. About this time, the enemy gave way, and the route became general.

"My recollections of the battle of San Jacinto.

"BEN. McCULLOCH.

"February 28, 1858."

Now, I merely read these documents to show the refutation which is given to these calumnies, and that they may become a record, and placed in the annals of the country while I am living, and not leave it to other hands to finish a work which Providence has accorded to me. I will, in concluding this point, read the testimony of General Rusk, to show that the Commander-in-Chief remained on the field, and continued in pursuit of the enemy until his horse, pierced with five balls, fell under him.

Extract from a letter of General Rusk to William B. Stout, relative to the conduct of General Houston, in the battle of San Jacinto:

"As to the halt spoken of, I know of none ordered by General Houston, except at the bog, or quagmire, after the Mexicans were defeated and in full retreat. At that point, I met with the general for the first time after he was wounded. The men were entangled and in confusion; the general ordered a halt to form the men."

From this time no hostile gun was fired. The last detachment of the enemy immediately surrendered. This was not in the onset of the action, but when it was over. Mr. Sherman displayed his prudence in the onset of the action, and secured his person beyond the reach of danger. Thus far, Mr. President, I have referred to documentary evidence that may be relied on, to establish the conduct of the general, which may be found in one of the most authentic histories of Texas; one written with good taste, succinct and instructing in its character, and giving a good idea of the object for which it was designed—Yoakum's History of Texas. It is a work with which the Commander-in-Chief had no connection, never having seen a page of it in manuscript in his life. His object has not been to write history, or to supervise its composition. His only object has been to vindicate himself against the calumnies that have been brought forward, and got up recently, for the purpose not only of attacking him, but assailing every man who was friendly to him, and that by individuals whose malignity has been bitter; whose hostility to the cause of Texas, and to everything like the establishment of good government, has been notorious and proverbial in Texas. The *author* of this almanac, Willard Rich-

ardson—I must immortalize him—if reports be true, and I have no reason to doubt them, had he been assigned to his proper place, would have been dignified by a penitentiary residence before this time, owing to the peccadilloes with which he was charged. Although they have been smothered and done away with, his character is not vindicated to the world. He still goes on from sin to sin, from abuse to slander. Sir, I have no disposition to animadvert more; but could the characters of these individuals, and the motives which prompted them, be known, it would not have been necessary for me to occupy the time of the Senate on this occasion; or to give a thought to what has transpired, in relation to the Commander-in-Chief of the army of Texas. I find, however, that bitter, that undying hostility to him, that will not perish even with his life; and I have no doubt the very creatures that are hunting him now, would hunt him, if they could, beyond the grave. No longer than last night—and I regret, exceedingly, to advert to it—I received a letter from a respectable gentleman in New York, containing an item that I must pay some attention to. I hate these trivial things; but yet they bear an import with them that seems to claim my attention. He says:

PORT CHESTER, WEST CHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK,
February 24, 1859.

MY DEAR GENERAL: Chagrined and mortified, I sit down to tell you of the burning disgrace that has, this evening, been given to your well-earned fame. Reverend James H. Perry, D. D., of New York, delivered in a lecture in the Methodist Episcopal Church this evening, the most bitter remarks respecting your bravery and honor, that ever passed human lips. The subject was "The battle of San Jacinto: its causes and consequences." Mr. Perry informed his large and intelligent audience that he was prompted by patriotic motives to enlist in the Texan cause; that he visited you at your camp, with letters of introduction, and was admitted a member of your staff. Without repeating the details of the battle, in which he took occasion to say that every advance movement of the army was without your consent, and only made by the wiser and more patriotic manifestations of the army, in which you were obliged to acquiesce, he closed by a peroration that astonished and wounded every person present. He said: "I wish it to be understood, or I speak what I do know, that the battle of San Jacinto was fought, and the victory was achieved in spite of General Houston; and the wreath that now encircles his brow, is the hero of that battle, has not in it one green leaf." I would not, my dear general, call your attention to this subject, but for the reason that the details of the lecture are to be given elsewhere at the North; and being a young man at the time the battle was fought, my whole theory of the causes and consequences," and the part taken by yourself, has been utterly destroyed, so far as the reverend doctor could do. May I inquire if you remember James H. Perry your aid-de-camp, and what life part he took in the battle of San Jacinto? Your answer will not only gratify me, but hundreds who listened to the defamations of your honored and cherished renown.

I am, very sincerely, your attached friend,

General SAM HOUSTON.

Now, Mr. President, for twelve years this gentleman has been sedulously engaged in defaming the character of the Commander-in-Chief, or attempting to do it. I was apprised of it before. Gentlemen of his denomination, of high respectability, assured me that a stop would be put to it. I see that he has broken out in a fresh place. It is necessary that I should give some of my knowledge of his character.

He came to the camp on the Colorado, with letters of introduction from the President and other members of the Cabinet, to the Commander-in-Chief, recommending him as a graduate of West

Point, or having been a student there. Being a good-looking gentleman, plausible in his manner, unembarrassed by diffidence, not very cultivated, still, would do very well for a soldier or officer, his appearance being fine, the general appointed him a member of his staff. Shortly after, reports came on very detrimental to him. The general was not apprised of them, and ordered him to drill Colonel Burleson's regiment. Colonel Burleson objected to his drilling his regiment, for the reason that he did not consider him a man of good character; that he had come to New Orleans with his wife, or some other woman, as was reported, and taking a free yellow girl from the North, he had attempted to dispose of her, as a slave, in the South; and some difficulties originated from the fact. His "patriotism" that he speaks of, which caused him to enlist in the cause of Texas, I rather suppose, from the influence of disagreeable circumstances, prompted him to seek a refuge in Texas. He came there. That was the reverend gentleman. He continued there, in his position as staff officer, until the arrival of the army on the Brazos.

An order was given by the general that no one should communicate from camp without the communication passing the general's eye; and, whenever an express was to leave camp, the letters were to be brought to him, so that he might know that nothing detrimental to the army should go out, or that anything necessary to be concealed would be disclosed to the world. An express was about to start. A letter of Major Perry that then was, was brought to the general. It was sealed. He opened it, and found it contained the grossest defamation and slander of himself; he sent for Major Perry; he gave the letter to the assistant inspector general, and told him to read it to Major Perry; it was so done. Major Perry, when asked by the Commander-in-Chief what he thought of it, observed, it was stronger than he imagined, and may be it was wrong. He then said, "Go to your duty, sir; I do not care for all the spies in the world, if they will tell the truth."

Perry remained in camp, still attached to the staff, and when they arrived at Harrisburg, he passed over Buffalo bayou with the spies. On the march to San Jacinto, he was taken under suspicious circumstances—having left the line of the Texans. He was taken by Captain Karnes and private Seacrist, of the spies, and brought to the general. They reported that he had changed his horse's caparison, also his musket for an escopet; and they believed he had communication with the enemy. The general ordered him to be disarmed and sent to the guard fire. Karnes said, "General, are you not going to execute him?" "No, Karnes," replied the general, "I have no leisure at this time to look into the matter." "Sir," said he, "if we had known that you would not have instantly executed him, you would never have been troubled with him; he is a traitor and a spy."

That was on the 20th. He remained under guard until the morning of the 21st. He sent the general a message, which is not precisely recollected. The general gave orders to restore his arms, giving him an opportunity to wipe off the stigma that he had placed upon his character, and gave him leave to go into the battle; whether he did or not is not known to me. When I heard

of his conduct, the general might have apprehended that he would have been the first object for him to assassinate; but he defies a traitor, a spy, or an assassin, if he can confront him. This is the Rev. James H. Perry, D. D. His letter from the Brazos shall be published after I return to Texas. It shall appear in the New York Herald. It will vindicate all I have said.

He says, in his letter from camp, that the general was not in the habit of drinking ardent spirits, but was a confirmed opium eater. I believe there never was one of them cured, and the general looks very little like an opium eater. His correspondent was the notorious Robert Potter, of North Carolina, who was Secretary of the Navy in Texas. The general had no hand in making him so. He was the gentleman with whom the reverend doctor corresponded. He acknowledges himself his spy and pimp upon the general; and they were a most worthy pair.

These are some of the circumstances that I have felt it my duty to state in vindication of the Commander-in-Chief. I think it is a duty that a man owes, after he has passed his life pretty much in the service of his country, and is about to retire from that service, that he should do a little red-ding up, and arranging of matters which posterity may not so well comprehend without explanation. I will call the attention of the honorable Senate to one fact; and I will ask why was the council called, and why was it desired? Because the indications were clear that the Commander-in-Chief intended that day to engage the enemy; that his arrangements, though silent, indicated his purpose. There were persons who censured his conduct from time to time, and charged him with cowardice. He was charged with retreating from Gonzales, and from the Colorado, and under a pressure of circumstances crossing the Brazos, with a design to cross the Trinity, and go east. Why did they not then call a council to counteract his designs? Why did they not interpose to prevent these things, if they believed them? No council of war was asked for until on the eve of battle; and the gentleman, who was the first to flee from the field, and who was charged with appropriating the spoils privately, was most active in that council. The spoils are a matter of some import. Is it supposable that Santa Anna, with his Mexican ostentation, would march at the head of the finest army ever marshaled in Mexico, and not have with him plate and jewels becoming the condition of a man whose sway was absolute, and whose expectation on his return was to assume the imperial purple, and the scepter of the Mexican monarchy? What ever became of these spoils? The Commander-in-Chief of the Texas army decreed the spoils to the army. Nor did he ever receive the value of one cent. Colonel Sherman was appointed president of the board to manage and distribute the spoils to the troops. Colonel Bennett has thrown some light upon that subject; and had he been called on by Colonel Sherman, after he charged him with appropriating them, it appears from his letter that he could have given much insight into the affair. Not one dollar's worth of the plate was ever produced; but the stragglers who lagged behind had enjoyed the opportunity of concealing them until a better time was afforded to them to carry them away.

They have charged the Commander-in-Chief with having more troops than he reported. Seven hundred on the Colorado was the number, according to the statement of Colonel Burleson, as he supposed. The General-in-Chief never reported more than six hundred and thirty-two; his efficient force never exceeded over seven hundred troops at any one point. At all events, such was the result of the campaign, that all the wisdom of man could not have rendered it more successful and beneficial to the country. Had he been drawn into action by indiscretion, and the attempt to force a battle, the bridge at Vince's would not have been cut down, which prevented the escape of the enemy; the enemy would have escaped; Santa Anna would have reached his reserve force of four thousand men on the Brazos. But by cutting off their retreat, by the Commander-in-Chief's own design of destroying the bridge, and leading his troops into action at the proper time, he secured for Texas all that wisdom and valor could have done, whether he exercised them or not.

The Commander-in-Chief is charged with receiving orders from the Secretary of War to march upon Harrisburg. He never received an order from the Secretary of War. By reference to this volume, containing the historical facts, it will be seen that he never intimated that he would march towards the Trinity, but gave orders to the troops to unite at Donoho's. That indicated his design to advance in pursuit of the enemy to Harrisburg. He was resolved never to pass the Trinity; and if he were to perish, it should be west of that boundary. Would he have submitted to the orders of the Secretary of War, who was suspended, or any one in his place, unless it was under the written order that would vindicate him to the world and to posterity? No written order is pretended for anything he had done; and the Secretary of War, acquiescing in his competency and his ability to command, never interfered with his designs in the smallest punctilio.

Thus has it been, Mr. President, that I have been driven to this recourse. I had no design, indeed I had no wish, but to pass from public life quietly and without interference. I know that I have not presented the facts in that succinct and lucid manner that I ought to have done; yet I have presented such points as I think essential, though they are documentary, and more than I would have desired, to vindicate the Commander-in-Chief in the position he has taken, and to show to the world that these calumnies, so recently circulated, are prompted by the deepest malignity, and by persons whose vices, could they be known, would sink them below the observation of all the virtuous and wise. This individual in the North who is seeking to illumine the world with his lectures, will find a new subject furnished him on this occasion.

Now, Mr. President, notwithstanding the various slanders that have been circulated about the Commander-in-Chief, it is somewhat strange that the only point about which there has been no contestation for fame and for heroic wreaths, is in relation to the circumstances connected with the capture of General Santa Anna. When he was brought into the camp and the interview took place, the Commander-in-Chief was lying on the ground. He did not lie as generals usually lie, for they have

comforts. The night before the battle he had lain on the cold ground, without a blanket, his saddle for his pillow; without covering, in the bleak norther that blew that night. He was no better off after the battle. Nor had he ever had a tent or canopy over his head, that he could claim, as General-in-Chief, save the blue canopy of Heaven. He had not one dollar in his pocket, nor a military chest, for he never received one while in command of the army. His personal and moral influence in the army held it together; for there was no Government, and all of hope that remained was centered in him, as the Government expressed it, for there were no other means. But, sir, when Santa Anna was taken and brought into camp, the general was dozing, after having had a sleepless night from suffering; his wound was severe. Looking up he saw Santa Anna, who announced to him in Spanish: "I am General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, President of the Republic of Mexico, and a prisoner at your disposition." Calmly and quietly it was received. The hand was waived to a box that stood by, and here Santa Anna was seated. After some time, with apparent emotion, but with great composure, what I had expected, under the circumstances, he proposed a negotiation for his liberation. He was informed that the general had not the power; that there was an organized civil Government, and must be referred to them. Santa Anna insisted upon negotiation; and expressed his great aversion to all civil government. The general assured him that he could not do it. He then observed to the general something like this: that he could afford to be generous; that he was very fortunate; born to no common destiny; that he had conquered the Napoleon of the West.

The Commander-in-Chief adverted to his conduct at the Alamo, as well as the massacre of Fannin and his men at Goliad. The first he sought to justify on the ground that it was in accordance with the rules of war. The second he excused himself for, assuring the general that he was not aware of any capitulation between General Urea and Colonel Fannin, and if he lived to regain power, he would make an example of Urea.

The Commander-in-Chief, after a while, asked him if he wanted refreshment. It was ordered. He was asked if he wished his marquee, if he desired his camp baggage, if he wished his aid-de-camp. He expressed great pleasure at the proposition, but looked doubtful as to whether it could be so. They were ordered. Colonel Almonte went and selected his baggage. His keys were never looked for; no search was made. He was treated as a guest. No indignity was offered him by the Commander-in-Chief. To be sure, there was some turbulence of feeling in camp, but no rude manifestations. Under these circumstances it was that Santa Anna was received. Propositions were made to the Commander-in-Chief that he should be executed, but they were repelled in a becoming manner. No one has sought to claim the honor of giving him on that occasion; and did the general feel a disposition to claim any renown, distinction, or fame, for any one act of his life, stripped of all its policy, he might do it for his conduct on that occasion.

But, sir, there was reason as well as humanity in it. While Santa Anna was held a prisoner, his friends were afraid to invade Texas, because they

knew not at what moment it would cause his sacrifice. His enemies dared not attempt a combination in Mexico for invasion, for they did not know at what moment he would be turned loose upon them. So that it guaranteed peace to Texas so long as he was kept a prisoner, and for that reason, together with reasons of humanity, his life was preserved. It is true, he had forfeited it to the laws of war. Retaliation was just; but was it either wise, or was it humane, that he should have perished?

The Commander-in-Chief, on that occasion, was not aware that he had the approval of Holy Writ for the course he adopted—though he subsequently became apprised of the fact; for we find that, after Elisha had smitten the Syrians and conducted them into the midst of Samaria, and had ordered their eyes to be opened, the King of Israel, Jehoram, said to the prophet: "My father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?" And he answered: "Thou shalt not smite them; wouldst thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." Sir, that sanctioned the course of the Commander-in-Chief on that occasion; and though he was not as familiar with the subject as he ought to have been, yet, when apprised of it afterwards, he was rejoiced to know that he had the authority of Holy Writ for his conduct.

I should not have felt it necessary to reply to the attacks that have been made upon me, were it not that I am to leave a progeny, that might, at some future time, be called on to know why a response was not given to these fabrications, and the denial given to them. There is not one word of truth contained in all the calumnies in this book, or of others, except one, and that is, that the Commander-in-Chief never communicated his counsel to any one. That is true, and it is the only truth in this or other books on the "campaign of San Jacinto." How could the general permit his designs to be known when mutiny and sedition were rife in camp, and when combinations were formed to thwart every measure that wisdom and prudence could devise, up to the very hour that the troops were formed for battle?

The truth of history has been perverted, and the opposite has been asserted. Contributions of material have been made to this almanac; it was concocted and arranged, and then given to the world in such a shape that the dissemination of the calumny throughout the United States must affect the individual to whom it was directed, and make some impression upon him, and destroy his reputation.

Good reasons have actuated me on this occasion. The character of the individuals who have propagated these slanders against the Commander-in-Chief, are such as are not known to the public at large, and might have weight in society that would poison the true source of history, and subserve, to some extent, their unworthy ends; when, if their characters were known, truth would receive no detriment from their statements.

I regret, Mr. President, that I could not have prepared my matter more at leisure; for it is but a few days past since I contemplated addressing the Senate on this subject. I should then have

done it with more pleasure, and with less detention of the honorable body; but this is the last occasion in which I ever expect that my voice will be heard in this Chamber; never again shall I address the President of this body.

Mr. President, in retiring from the duties which have sat lightly upon me in this Chamber since I have been associated with it, though changes have taken place, and successive gentlemen have occupied the seats in the Senate, I have believed, and felt it my duty, to cultivate the relations of good feeling and friendship with each and every gentleman, and I hope the same cordial respect will continue to obtain in this body. I know the high and important duties that devolve

upon Senators, and I have confidence that their attention and their great abilities will be called to the discharge of those duties; that they will, on great national subjects, harmonize so as to give vigor to, and cement our institutions; and that they will keep pace in their efforts to advance the country with the progress that seems to invite it onward. My prayers will remain with them, that light, knowledge, wisdom, and patriotism may guide them, and that their efforts will be perpetually employed for blessings to our country; that under their influence and their exertions the nation will be blessed, the people happy, and the perpetuity of the Union secured to the latest posterity. [Applause in the galleries.]